

NFAC 5477-79
15 October 1979

Memorandum for DD/NFA

Subject: NFAC Planning and Programming for the Production
of Interagency Intelligence Papers

1. Last month, you informally asked me to look at NFAC's production planning system and give you some thoughts on the subject. My research into the matter, by no means complete, leads to these tentative conclusions:

a. NFAC is on the right track at the moment in establishing a rational production planning system and cycle.

b. Within the Agency and Community-wide, the principal gap, if any, seems to be in terms of longer range planning. This suspected weakness is more apparent with respect to the substantive, analytical side (thought processes) rather than the scientific and technological side which is developing the hardware of the future needed to collect data and needed to assist in its collation and analysis, as well as storage and retrieval.

2. The attached think piece concerns this seeming weakness--longer term planning with respect to what we should be focusing on in the future.

3. These are my own thoughts. My colleagues on the Senior Review Panel have found this paper interesting, but have considerable doubts as to the feasibility of such long-term forecasting; that is beyond two to five years in the future. They are probably right, particularly with respect to political-military forecasting. Nevertheless, we should keep trying to push our mental frontiers further out in the future.


Bruce Palmer Jr.

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ATTACHMENT

15 October 1979
General Palmer

NFAC Planning and Programming for the Production of Interagency Intelligence Papers

Introduction

This paper will address NFAC's planning and programming with respect to NIEs and IIMs in the context of substantive intelligence matters rather than funding, personnel and other resources.

Current Situation

Under the terms of Executive Order No. 12036, dated 24 January 1978, the NSC Policy Review Committee chaired by the DCI is charged among other things with the basic responsibility of establishing "requirements and priorities for national foreign intelligence." The PRC (Intelligence) in turn has promulgated the National Intelligence Topics (NITs), divided into Current Interest Topics deemed important to senior policymakers over the next six to nine months and Basic Long-Term Interest Topics intended to guide the efforts of the Intelligence Community over the longer term. Both current and long-term lists of topics are prioritized. This NITs document is periodically reviewed and updated; the current issue is dated July 1979.

The other basic intelligence planning document is the Attachment to DCID No. 1/2, Basic US Foreign Intelligence Requirements Categories and Priorities. (The current document is dated 19 July 1979). This paper, reviewed formally on an annual basis, is consistent with the long-term NITs and provides basic guidance to all intelligence activities, including collection, analysis and production. The priorities framework is a matrix of over 150 countries and over 100 topical or subject categories.

The above two documents constitute the basic planning guidance currently provided to CIA and other elements of the Intelligence Community. Guidance, however, is current and mid-term in nature as there appears to be no attempt to provide any long-term guidance for planning the analytical work of the Agency or the Community.

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In the early summer of 1979, the NFAC Production Board produced its first Production Forecast for NIEs and IIMs for the period July 1979 to June 1980. The comments and recommendations of INR (State), DIA and NSA were considered in the formulation phase. NFAC and Community-wide analyst availability was a major consideration. The substantive basis for the forecast took into consideration the current NIEs as well as the needs of policymakers and consumers as perceived by the NIOs and office heads.

The above document is the present production forecast-- it is under continuous revision and the schedule for the current quarter is continuously monitored by the DD/NFA.

Discussion

The present system is workable, but it could be improved. Ideally, the annual NIE/IIM Production Forecast and annual Office Production Forecasts should be developed concurrently. The July through June 12-month cycle appears likewise to be workable. It should provide reasonable correlation with and support for the budget cycle.

What seems to be missing is a longer range planning effort which could provide more insights into long-term (5-15 years) intelligence needs for the future, provide more accurate clues as to the kinds of analysts needed for the future, and perhaps most importantly, lend a constancy, continuity and consistency to the national intelligence effort over the long haul.

On the technological side, the STAP in their July 1979 report articulated the need for such long-range planning in terms of an overall R&D strategy for CIA, pointing out that NFAC, DDO and DDS&T should all have a role to play in the process. STAP suggested that NFAC play a "lead role" within NFAC, DDO and DDS&T groupings in establishing "long range (beyond 2-3 years) functional intelligence needs requiring R&D support" rather than let collection technology drive the system. Specifically, STAP felt that production R&D was lacking and drifting, and that NFAC should develop a short list of major policy-issue-consumer needs which might be operative 5-15 years in the future and not likely to be met by current methods. DDS&T has responded to the STAP's report, agreeing with much, if not most, of it. The proposals under consideration, however, appear to be predominantly hardware in nature.

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New technology and methodology that will assist intelligence analysts in the analysis of highly complex problems (for example, an integrated system dynamics model that can predict food production, water availability and population growth for a specific country) are of course very important. What NFAC should be studying in the longer range future, however, clearly is equally important as how NFAC might improve its research and analysis. The former aspect--the "what" (to include the "where"--that is which areas in the world)--is the focus of this paper.

An Approach to Long-Range Intelligence Planning

The instrument would be a long-range (5-15 years) planning document which attempts to project the nature of the world in 1985-95 and the significance for the United States. Such a document should provide long-term guidance for (i) the annual NFAC interagency production forecast, to include both military and non-military components; (ii) NFAC office and interoffice production programs for the same annual time frame; and (iii) R&D projects to enhance intelligence analysis and production.

In its first section, the paper would attempt to portray graphically the major geo-political/strategic interests of the United States believed to have a more or less permanent character. The principal advantage of a graphic display is that it illuminates the global, interrelated nature of basic US interests which remain relatively unchanging.

For example, an outline map of the world could be used to bring out the basically insular character of the United States' geographic position in the world and US strategic interests growing out of that fact of nature. This global map would reflect the following:

- The undisputed importance of the USSR-East Europe region and China, the study of which has dominated NFAC work and is expected to continue to do so.

- Other areas of central strategic importance to the United States.

- Countries, outside of NATO, which have a special significance for or relationship with the United States for historical, geo-political, economic or psychological reasons. A rough model of such a map is enclosed.

To illustrate the relative power potential of various regions in the world, a chart could be developed showing their relative share of world industrial output. Based on known trends, another chart could project those shares to 1990.

To emphasize the maritime nature of the United States, another global map, oriented towards the United States, could show the major world sea lanes presently carrying US trade to its major overseas customers and the relative size of that trade with various overseas regions. This map would show the major sea routes emanating from US ports on the Atlantic, Gulf, and Pacific Coasts; the relative amount of traffic (measured either by tonnage or by dollar value of the cargo, and including both imports and exports) could be indicated by the width of the lines drawn.

The first such global shipping map could be for the latest year for which data is available. Then considering past patterns (last 10-20 years) and current trends, a second map could show projected trade patterns about 10 years in the future, roughly 1990.

Assuming the availability of data, another series of global maps could depict major international air routes (used by all major carriers) and the relative magnitude of passenger traffic and/or dollar value of cargo carried over major segments of those routes. Again, the first map could be for the latest year of available data and the second, projected to 1990.

There are other maps and charts that might be considered; the foregoing is only illustrative. An overall narrative would explain the various maps and charts and tie them together in a coherent fashion. The overall thrust would bring out (i) the geo-political position of the United States and its interdependence in an international sense on countries, resources and bases located overseas; and (ii) those regions and smaller areas in the world of greatest strategic importance to the United States.

The second section of the paper might examine broad international trends at work in the world and speculate as to the way they might develop, their effects, and the likely consequences. Major political, economic, societal and industrial/technological trends would be identified. With respect to western industrialized nations, this section could also explore the political and societal impact of such matters as the continued rise of anti-institutional attitudes and behavior coupled with a lack of corporate efforts to achieve common goals; and growing doubts of peoples regarding the capacity of their governments to cope with the growing intransigence of already immensely complex problems. Major manpower/ethnic grouping/demographic trends which could have a major effect on the political balance

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within major states might also be examined. Additionally, major human and material resources might be examined, seeking to identify critical problems which will face the world in the 1990s--population, food, water, timber, energy and the like. (Existing and on-going studies, of course, can be used as inputs. OGCR, for example, is providing the NFAC contribution to a study of world resource problems, "GLOBAL 2000" being conducted under the auspices of the Council on Environmental Quality.)

In national security terms, this section might also examine trends in heavy industry and high technology of major significance to national war-making capacities; major trends in armaments and arms control (or conversely, the failure of arms control efforts); and other complex matters of major significance. Again, the paper would draw broad conclusions as to the projected significance of these trends in the 1985-95 timeframe.

From the foregoing study and other analysis, the paper might speculate as to likely alternative political/power alignments in the period 1985-95. As examples: Will we move towards a rough bipolar balance (US-NATO-China-Japan versus USSR-Warsaw Pact-Vietnam-India) or towards a triangular, or multipolar world? Are the market economies of the Pacific Basin becoming more important to the United States than those of Western Europe? Will there be any basic change in the balance of power in the Middle East? Will NATO still be intact (assuming no war)? What will Black Africa look like?

In sum, a global/strategic overview of the world from an American perspective and projected into the long-term future would be the overall aim of the long-range planning document.

Summary

Such an NFAC annually-prepared long-range planning document would provide the longer term basis for NFAC's annual production forecast for interagency, for interoffice and single office production. Part of that annual planning and programming cycle should involve deliberate consultation with the NSC Staff, Department of State, and OSD at a high policymaker level as well as coordination within the Intelligence Community with regard to both the long-range planning document and the production forecast. With respect to the Community, an effort should be made to increase significantly the involvement of INR/State, DIA and NSA.

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What might be expected from such a long-range planning document? First of all, it should provide a better basis for planning periodic country/regional estimates because the prime areas of US interest are clearly indicated. Secondly, it should suggest areas and topics that need additional research and analysis to support possible future estimates that can be seen looming in the longer time frames.

Bruce Palmer, Jr.
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